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SPOTS and STRIPES

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Moni, the littlest tiger, on the lawn at Lion House Hill

PHOTO BY ELLIS

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SPRING, BUT NO SPRING LAMB

The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra, la, just aren't in my spring picture! Not that I'm against spring or mom or anything like that—it's just that when spring rolls around (and, lately, it's been doing that every year) my heart beats more quickly at the sight of the Zoo's many baby animals than it does with the blooming of the azaleas. Spring starts earlier in the Zoo than elsewhere in the city because what we classify as "spring babies" sometimes arrive in February or January.

In January three red-fronted barbets were hatched by the parents. We think this is possibly the first recorded breeding of this species in captivity. We also had a serval and three leopard cat kittens.

In February a female African porcupine was born and a male scimitar-horned oryx. Twin golden marmosets made their appearance and delighted the visitors with their scampering from mother to father. A Geoffroy's cat kitten was born and was removed

for hand-rearing. Then, along came Mary, a female African black rhinoceros, even more adorable than her brother, Dillon. Blue-breasted quail and canyon tinamous and three tiny Egyptian spiny mice helped swell the February list of births.

March was a banner month with Jennie presenting us with a little male orangutan. Even though Jennie was solicitous for her new baby, she was unable to nurse him, and Louise Gallagher, once more, became foster mother to her second orangutan baby. Louise has raised two chimpanzee babies, two gorilla babies, and now two orangutan babies. During a gala occasion, when the orangutan was a month old, he was given a name at the Indonesian Embassy residence. Ambassador and Mrs. Soedjatmoko had selected the name Bagong as being the most appropriate. As Mrs. Soedjatmoko explained: "Bagong is part of folklore. It's a name given to a mythological being who is both serpent and clown and a sort of 'half-god'. He gives advice but he also criticizes his bosses. Not only the bosses, but the government also."

Mrs. Soedjatmoko, wife of the Indonesian Ambassador, holds a representation of the mythological Bagong for whom the little orangutan was named. Mrs. Louise Gallagher, foster mother, holds young Bagong Orangutan.



SMITHSONIAN PHOTO

Not to be outdone by Jennie, Mohini did herself proud and gave birth to four tiger cubs just four days later. There were two white cubs and two normal-color cubs and there was much joy and jubilation throughout the Zoo. The joy was short-lived, however, when 48 hours later Mohini went into labor again and had a fifth, but stillborn, cub. During the protracted labor, Mohini inadvertently lay on and crushed three of the cubs. All was not lost, fortunately, as one white cub was uninjured. He was removed from the cage and rushed to the Reeds' home for Mrs. Reed's skillful ministrations. The cub was named Moni, which is a nickname for Mohan. Mohan, the progenitor of all the white tigers in captivity, died last December (at the Maharajah of Rewa's palace in India) after a long and productive life. Moni returned home to the Zoo on May 11 and took up residence in the Lion House. Being a Crown Prince, he has the added pleasure of a huge enclosure on Lion House Hill where he can romp and play and watch people for two hours each morning and another hour and a half in the afternoon. Members of the Friends of the National Zoo take turns "tiger sitting" during his playtime on the lawn.

March babies also included two Barbary apes, a sooty mangabey, 10 crested partridges, 4 Indian hoopoes, 3 canyon tinamous, and 6 blue-breasted quail.

April Fool's Day was celebrated with the birth of a female reindeer, which was named, for some strange reason, April. Five more Barbary ape babies swelled the colony to a total of 32. Possibly the National Zoological Park has more Barbary apes than the Rock of Gibraltar can claim. Black-necked swan cygnets to the number of four were a welcome addition as well as a black swan cygnet, a Magellan goose gosling, and five wood ducks.

An aristocratic-looking, even though soft and fluffy, llama was born and named Daiquiri. The llamas are named for soft drinks (it says here in fine print) but one of the llamas was named Brandy before anyone knew it (except the ones that named her). The baby llama was Brandy's baby and several names were proposed before Daiquiri was agreed upon, thus adding another illicit name to the llama group. But you couldn't very well name the baby of a llama named Brandy something like Milk, could you?

Another reindeer, female again, was born later in the month and, with our eyes on the stars, she was named Taurus. Taurus doesn't sound very girl-like so she has been nicknamed Tauri. The baby reindeer were removed from their mothers for hand-rearing and Sonny Stroman, headkeeper of the Large Mammal Division, was allowed to take them home for the usual TLC (and hard work). While Sonny was performing his Zoo chores, his wife, Mary, took over the bottle routine and was probably aided and abetted by their sons.

One of the outstanding April births was that of a Celebes crested macaque, Cynopithecus niger. In captivity, births of these strange-looking primates are rare. According to the latest edition of the International Zoo Yearbook, Celebes crested macaques have been born in zoos in Chicago, Los Angeles, Oklahoma City, San Antonio, and now the National Zoo. Outside the United States, they have been born only in zoos in Birmingham, England; Colchester, England; Jogjakarta, Indonesia; and Mexico City. So you can see we have joined a very select group of breeders.

The month of April was ended with the birth of twin Geoffroy's marmosets.

May was a "boom" month with the arrival of the first sable antelopes ever born in the NZP—a boy and a girl. A most unusual event also occurred in May, the birth of twin yaks! Three leopard cat kittens, two Père David's deer, a male reindeer which is still with its mother, a male Nile lechwe, a male muntjak were added to our "population explosion". Another exciting event is the activity within the pouch of the female parma wallaby. No one has seen the little one yet but one of these days we hope it will peep out of the pouch and let us admire it.

We certainly have had a bumper crop of birds and mammals and we could not complete our roster of spring babies without mentioning the 16 baby garter snakes that were born. With a high degree of pride, members of the Reptile Division have requested a yard for their babies of an equal size as that of Moni!



SMITHSONIAN PHOTO

Parma wallaby

Betsy Mikols and Judy Block, as well as Mrs. Reed and Mrs. Gallagher, had babies to love and feed. Betsy, our medical technologist in the hospital, is raising the male baby serval. He was named D'Artagnan and, thank heavens, that got shortened to Tang. Judy Block, secretary of the Keeper Training Project, is raising the Geoffroy's cat kitten and he has been named Monmouth. When queried about the strange name, Judy denied it had anything to do with New Jersey but was named for the only Geoffroy she knew of—one Geoffroy Monmouth. Geoffroy Monmouth, wherever you are, there is a darling little kitten carrying your name!

—Billie Hamlet

BALLADE OF A ZOO BUFF

The zoo is a wonderful place;
I'm happy to say it with feeling.
No animal's nature is base;
The puma is very appealing.
A day with the apes is revealing;
They rather suggest me to you;
A stay with the hippos is healing—
I never get bored at the zoo.

The jaguar is girded with grace;
Have you seen an elephant kneeling?
The seals set a scintillant pace;
The rhesuses swing from the ceiling.
The finches like swooping and wheeling;
The tones of the civet and gnu
Are purer than temple-bells pealing—
I never get bored at the zoo.

There isn't the tiniest trace
Of double or quadruple dealing;
The crocodile has a sweet face—
Would he think of cheating or stealing?
The polar bear dreams of congealing
And I dream while watching him, too,
But this I'd not dream of concealing:
I never get bored at the zoo.

MILTON BRACKER

(Reprinted from Zoosounds, Oklahoma Zoological Society)

TUATARAS

On June 4 a small reception was held in the Reptile House for the presentation of a pair of tuataras by Ambassador Frank Corner of New Zealand.

The tuataras are important additions to the National Zoo's collection not only because of their rarity but also because of the place they hold as the bridge with prehistoric animals. Tuataras are often referred to as "living fossils" as they are the sole survivors of the Age of Reptiles and are scarcely changed from those that lived during the Triassic Period of 200 million years ago.

Although they look like lizards, they are not lizards but are classified in a completely different order—Rhynchocephalia (meaning "beak-head"). They differ from lizards and other reptiles by virtue of an additional bar of bone in the side of the skull, the absence of any male organ of copulation, and by having teeth that are fused to the edge of the jaw rather than set in sockets. They have an overhanging beak on the upper jaw which is separated by a notch from the rest of the jaw.

Adult tuataras are brownish-olive in color with a small yellow spot in the center of each scale. Enlarged, spiny scales form a crest down the back and tail. In length, from snout to tail, they range from 19 to 31 inches. The male adult weighs a little over two pounds whereas the female is usually about half as heavy. The male's head is massive with considerable development of jowl in contrast to the female's more delicately constructed head and broader abdomen.

Tuataras were once common on the mainland of New Zealand but now exist only on 20 small, waterless, nearly inaccessible islands off the coast of New Zealand. These islands are home for great colonies of various kinds of shearwaters or petrels (called mutton-birds by the New Zealanders) which nest in underground burrows. The tuataras share these burrows with the mutton-birds and live together harmoniously. Their cohabitation of the burrows is made easy through much of the year as the bird is usually off fishing during the day and the tuatara is out at night foraging for food. When the bird migrates from May through August the tuatara uses the burrow for hibernation. Even though the mutton-birds provide ready-made homes for the tuataras, with about three burrows for every square yard of suitable surface, the reptiles can and do make their own burrows independently of the birds.

The food of the tuataras, in the wild, consists mostly of insects, especially beetles and large wingless grasshoppers. An occasional lizard is eaten as well as earthworms and snails. Petrel eggs and sometimes a nestling petrel round out the diet.

The growth of a tuatara is very slow and Dr. William Dawbin, a New Zealander, who is probably the world's authority on the tuatara, believes that it takes the tuatara 20 years to reach sexual maturity. This leads to his surmise that some of the full-grown tuataras on the New Zealand islands may be over 100 years old. The eggs are believed to be fertilized nearly a year before being laid, with an incubation period of about 15 months. With other reptiles the incubation period never exceeds 9 months.

Dr. Dawbin, now with Sydney University in Australia, has done extensive research on the tuatara and maintains a colony of 21 individuals in his laboratory at the University. He has also successfully incubated and produced live tuataras under captive conditions, something that no one else has been able to do. One of the great mysteries of the tuatara is why it did not disappear ages ago, along with all its relatives.

The New Zealand Government rigidly protects the tuatara on its islands. None is allowed to leave New Zealand without the permission of the Officer in Charge of New

Zealand Wildlife, Department of Internal Affairs. Tuataras are given only to zoos which can provide the proper quarters and attention. The list of requests is long and the National Zoo is honored to have been selected as one of the few zoos to meet the requirements.

A special cage has been constructed in the Reptile House. Artificial burrows have been provided, with the interior of one being visible to the Zoo visitors by means of a red light. The percentage of humidity in the cage is between 74 and 90. The whole cage is air-conditioned and will be maintained at 75° during the day and 65° at night. In one corner of the cage there is a basking place with an infra-red light overhead to keep it warm. The temperature of the cage can be lowered to such a degree that the tuataras will be encouraged to go into normal hibernation.

Adjoining the tuatara cage, a special graphic display has been prepared by Joe Falletta of the Zoo's Exhibits Shop and Jaren Horsley, head of the Reptile Division. By use of a back-lighted projector, a slide show will be presented at frequent intervals showing the habitat of the tuataras, their cohabitation with mutton-birds. A map of New Zealand will be part of the display indicating the location of the tuatara islands. Interesting facts about these strange creatures will also be portrayed in the special exhibit.

According to the latest issue of the International Zoo Yearbook, only 17 tuataras are on exhibit in the zoos of the world. In the United States, there has been one on exhibit in the Detroit Zoo for the past 4 years and the St. Louis Zoo has had one for approximately the same length of time.

—Billie Hamlet

DID YOU KNOW?

Bears have handicaps. Most bears have an extremely well developed sense of smell, but their eyes are small and they don't see or hear as well as many other animals.

Young bears are born during the winter and usually are twin cubs.

Although bears appear clumsy, some of them can attain speeds of 30 miles an hour

or more when running. Most of them can climb trees. The polar bear's paws are equipped with non-skid soles for traveling across ice, enabling the big bear to sprint across the slippery surface at speeds up to 25 miles per hour. A polar bear is also able to paddle hundreds of miles between ice floes.

Young seals do not know how to swim at birth, but are taught by their mothers.

The Maine coon cat is a breed identified with Angora cats and is able to tolerate extremely low temperatures.

The teeth of the African aardvaark are cylindrical and have neither roots nor enamel.

The only wild pig native to America is the peccary, still found in small groups in Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.

Female bald eagles are larger than males.

The elf owl is no larger than an English sparrow and hides in a hole in a giant cactus trunk during the day, waiting for darkness before it emerges.

The most popular State bird is the cardinal. It holds the official title in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia.

At least 20,000 species of fish are known to mankind. About 1,000 of these have been identified from the Congo River.

A tank made of glass or acrylic plastic is the best for a water turtle.

The largest frog in the world is the Goliath frog of Africa. Its large thigh bones are highly prized by the natives for use in ceremonial rites.

Fleas are commonly called biting pests but actually they saw with a razor-sharp stylus to get blood to drink.

Neon gobies go over other fish looking for parasites which seem choice morsels to them; hence they are sometimes called vacuum-cleaner fish.

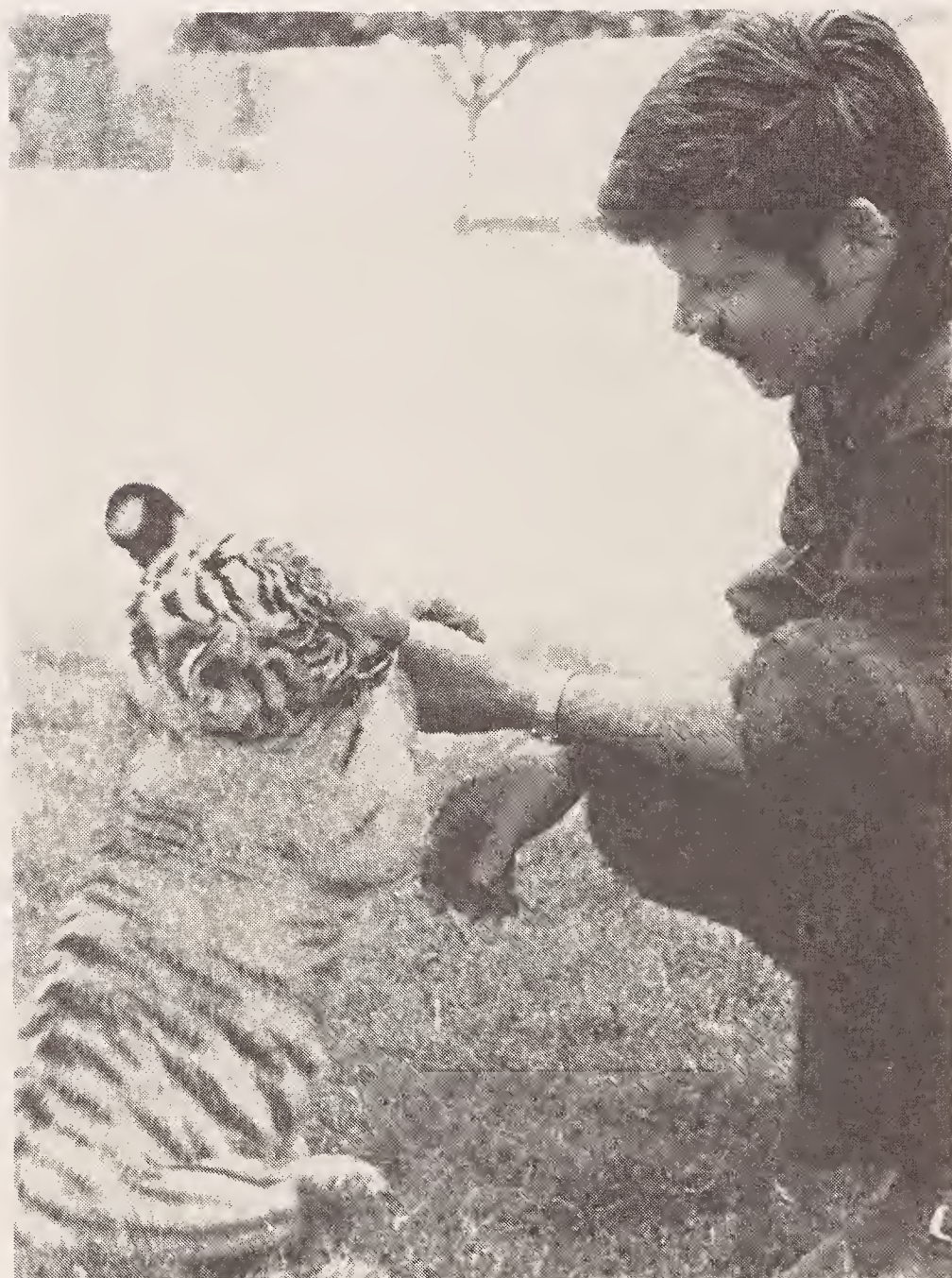
—M. De Prato

THE LADIES AND THE TIGER

As a group of teen-aged boys passed the large enclosed grassy plot in front of the Lion House, one of them quipped, "Shall we throw her some peanuts?" The lone occupant of the enclosure smiled and said, "Sorry. I don't like peanuts," then she rested her elbows on the fence and gazed at the hundreds of people swarming up the hills of the Zoo. "So this is how it feels to be on the inside looking out," mused the FONZ guide as she waited for the arrival of Moni, the white tiger cub, who was to be in her care for the next two hours. In a few moments, the headkeeper of carnivores, Bert Barker, appeared, bearing the wriggling cub. He placed the 30-pound kitten in the dewy grass and the little tiger immediately wobbled toward the fence where a crowd of children had gathered to greet him. The fun had just begun!

Who would have guessed that so many full-grown men and women would have been so eager to baby-sit with a tiger? At the May meeting of FONZ guides, Dr. Ted Reed

PHOTO BY "VIA"



Moni poses with Bill Xanten, Administrative Assistant, Department of Living Vertebrates.

announced that Moni, who had been lovingly cared for by Mrs. Reed for two months, would be returning to the Zoo on May 11. When he asked for volunteers to accompany Mohini's baby during morning and afternoon romps in his specially prepared yard, hands shot up all over the place. The maternal instinct ran rampant. The guides were assured that they would each get a turn at tiger-sitting, but that they would be sharing the honor with the faithful preg-watchers who had monitored Mohini's recent pregnancy.

Seven days a week, from 10:00 a. m. until noon, and from 2:30 to 4:00 p. m., Moni charms thousands of visitors to the National Zoo. Padding alongside the wire fence, he tempts tiny fingers to touch him, but that, of course, is a "no, no." Old and young alike enjoy watching his kittenish antics, and ask dozens of questions about the care and feeding of tigers, Moni's ancestry, the genetic factors involved in producing the rare white Bengals, and how you get to be a tiger-sitter.

Like his human counterparts, the youngster plays hard, eats heartily, and tires

easily. After about an hour of bounding after imaginary prey and chasing along his side of the fence after real children, keeper Tony Olds brings his lunch, a mixture of baby-food meat, cereal, and formula. Moni laps up this gruel, resists having his face wiped, then generally heads for the shade of his favorite bushes at the upper end of the enclosure where he stretches out for a little nap. Being a cat, he has a mind of his own, and no amount of coaxing will bring him from his retreat to indulge camera-toting fans.

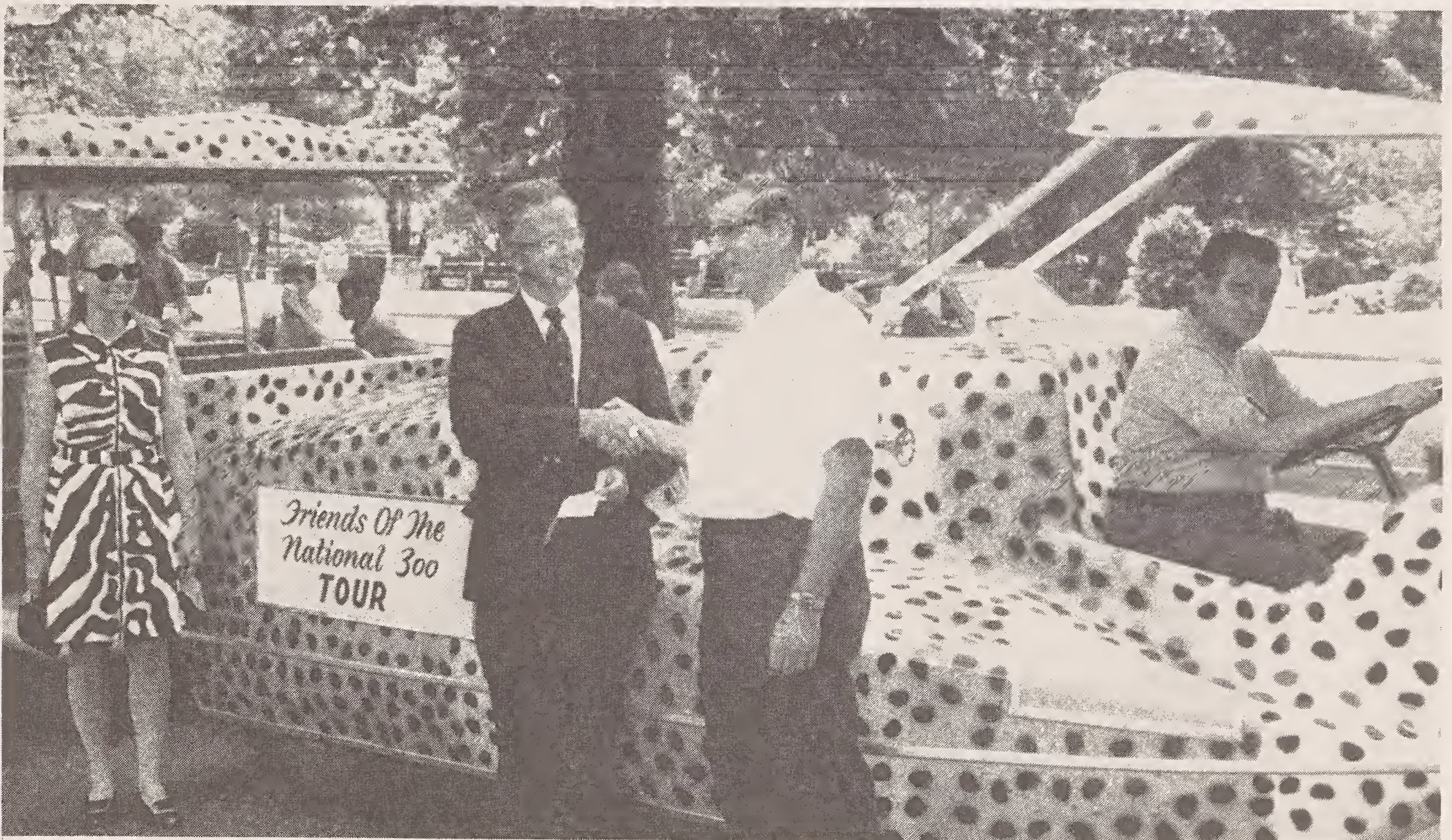
If all goes well, the tiger will continue his twice daily exercise periods through the summer. His enthusiastic sitters are anxiously anticipating future assignments. We just hope the play periods have been as much fun for Moni as they have been for us.

—Phyllis S. Yingling

TRACKLESS TRAIN

One of the most ambitious dreams of the FONZ finally became a reality on May 16th

A beaming Peter Andrews receives the first check, proceeds from the trackless train rides, from Harold Chance, president of the Chance Manufacturing Company. Peter Andrews and Timothy V.A. Dillon, past president of the FONZ, had spent many months studying various methods of zoo transportation before this colorful train was selected. In the course of their investigations, they visited Philadelphia, the Catskill Game Farm, the Botanical Gardens in Norfolk, and San Francisco. It seems almost too good to be true that the train is now running, —and contributing to the Friends' educational program.



NZP PHOTO

when the first trackless train ride began operating in the Zoo. The ride is approximately two miles long and at present includes three stops. Three trains are now being used, one painted in tiger design, one in leopard, and one in zebra stripes. More trains will be added as public interest demands.

Tickets are 50 cents for the entire ride. Passengers may get off at any of the three stops and board again after viewing the animal exhibits. Stops are located opposite the Zoo restaurant, large mammal house, and outdoor flight cage.

The proceeds from the trackless train ride go to the educational program of the Friends of the National Zoo.

ANNUAL MEETING

On the evening of May 20th the FONZ met in the elephant house. First on the program was the speaker of the evening, John Perry, Assistant Director of the Zoo. His subject was "Where are Zoos Going?" and he said they are going in many directions. The ones that aim simply at entertainment are trying to be more entertaining. Some concentrate on research; some are moving away from cities and showing animals in more spacious, more natural environments; some are much concerned with problems of conservation. The National Zoo shares in all these interests.

The Friends of the National Zoo have chosen education as their special function and in this they are encouraged by the Zoo. He pointed out that lack of funds has slowed their progress, but said that this may be the breakthrough year for the Friends, as the trackless train has become a reality, and the Friends have the contract for selling souvenirs and balloons. With the prospect of money in the bank, more can be done to educate the visitors. The guided tours are an excellent beginning, and Mr. Perry suggested that weekend meetings might be held, when the biggest crowds are in attendance; leaflets might be

prepared, relating to various areas of the Zoo, and selling for 5 to 10 cents; and possibly a nature trail could be made in the Park, which has its own native flora and fauna. What the FONZ should do, he said, is to stress the relevance of wild animals in the world today, and their relevance to the environment we share with them, one on which we all depend.

Election of Officers then took place, with the following results:

President, Peter Andrews
Vice President, Daniel Gold
Secretary, Doris Lahr
Treasurer, Anita G. Whitlock

The Zoo staff then presented the outgoing President, Timothy V. A. Dillon, with an engraved pewter mug; Board members gave him a handsome photograph, by Donna Grosvenor, of Rewati, the year-old offspring of Mohini. The Annual Mohini Award went to Barbara Robinson in appreciation of her efforts to get the educational program organized.

"To operate exclusively for educational and charitable purposes, and in particular to educate the general public on matters relating to the increase and improvement of the facilities and the collection of the National Zoological Park, and to foster its use by the general public and the schools for educational purposes"

—FROM ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ZOO, CHARTERED UNDER THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA NON-PROFIT CORPORATION ACT.

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